

**COUNCIL SUMMARY BACKGROUND BRIEFING:
KING COUNTY REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER ISSUES**

This briefing summarizes recent actions taken by the three regional committees formed as a result of the merge of King County and Metro. The three regional committees are the Regional Policy Committee, the Regional Water Quality Committee, and the Regional Transit Committee. We will also include updates on the King County Flood Control Zone District and the King County wastewater rate increase in this section. This is intended as a summary briefing; staff can provide more details on any of the items below.

REGIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE (RPC)

Status Report on the Review of the Solid Waste Transfer and Management Plan: King County staff provided a briefing for the Committee at the October 9 meeting. The material presented at this meeting was the subject of an October 21 briefing for Council and development of a comment letter on the Plan review.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13.

REGIONAL TRANSIT COMMITTEE (RTC)

The Regional Transit Committee met on October 16 and received an overview of the planning process to eliminate up to 17% of Metro's bus service (645,000 hours of transit service) beginning in 2014 should the Legislature not pass a state transportation revenue package by the end of year that includes a local option revenue package to help fund Metro transit and local roads. The impact to transit riders, highway congestion and people who are transit-dependent is significant. While the County has implemented many reforms to reduce costs since 2009, introduced a temporary, low-yielding funding mechanism that expires in 2014, and used reserve funds, Metro's estimated budget shortfall to maintain service levels is \$75 million per year. Any new funding package to help meet revenue requirements is certain to require a public vote.

King County Metro's *Service Guidelines*, the heart of the County's Transit Strategic Plan, provides clear metrics for evaluating system performance and a methodology for reducing service that focuses on cutting, reducing or consolidating the least productive routes first. The enormity of the reductions will mean cuts into productive routes as well, and will be phased in between 2014 and 2015. If cuts proceed, all areas of the County will be affected. For Bellevue and the Eastside, the cuts come at time when bus ridership is on the rise and future demand will be significant. Bellevue continues to advocate for additional service consistent with the City's Transit Master Plan that is being updated presently and calls for significant new service levels within Bellevue, the greater Eastside and the region to keep pace with existing and planned growth and economic development.

REGIONAL WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE (RWQC)

Summary of October 2, 2013 Meeting:

- **Report on Options to Provide a Comprehensive Summary of the Wastewater Treatment Division's Long Range Capital Program.** In 2012, the County Council, RWQC and Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee (MWPAAC) requested that the King County Executive develop options for a single location or source for information regarding the Wastewater Treatment Division's long-range capital improvement program. The Executive produced a report that sets forth several options for a format or platform to provide project information for all types of projects in a single location to better inform decision makers and ratepayers. The Committee discussed the options presented, including a conventional report, a matrix type table report and a web based option with specific links to projects and programs. No specific action was required of the Committee at this time.
- **Proviso Report on Water Quality Monitoring Recommendations.** King County's 2013 budget contained a proviso requiring additional information, analysis and recommendations regarding current and proposed water quality monitoring activities. This proviso was intended to build upon the 2012 water quality monitoring report developed by the Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD). WTD's contributions to water quality monitoring were reduced between 2008 and 2011 as a cost savings measure, resulting in reductions in monitoring in lakes and streams around King County. The 2012 report described the changing programmatic needs and a division effort to reprioritize spending due to the budget reductions.

The 2013 proviso analyzed changing regulatory issues, public health concerns, liability issues, overlaps with NPDES permit requirements, and opportunities for coordination with cities. The Committee received a briefing on the proviso report and asked questions regarding the overlap with other efforts and how to specifically identify when wastewater ratepayer funds are being used in order to ensure that wastewater funds are only used for wastewater purposes. This was a briefing only; no action was required from the Committee.

- **Overview of Washington State Fish Consumption Assumptions and Water Quality Standards.** Fish consumption rates are used in part to establish regulatory requirements for water quality standards under state law. However, state regulators are currently investigating whether the existing fish consumption rate is accurate and reflective of the consumption rate of the highest consumers of fish. New water quality standards based upon a higher assumed rate of fish consumption will affect industrial discharges directly, but could also mean tighter pollution controls for stormwater and sewage system discharges as well. The Committee received a high level overview briefing on the issues and Ecology's process for future rulemaking.

The next meeting of the RWQC is scheduled for Wednesday, December 4.

KING CONSERVATION DISTRICT CONSERVATION PANEL/TASK FORCE

This is a follow-up to the written briefing Council received on September 23, 2013 on the King Conservation District (KCD) Conservation Panel/Task Force initiative. On October 23, 2013, the Conservation Panel/Task Force held its final meeting. As explained in more detail in September's briefing, the group brought its work to conclusion by focusing on two primary items: (1) identifying the top concerns from participants and ideas for resolving them, and (2)

developing a short list of conservation and natural resource programs that deserve further regional consideration.

Concerns and Ideas for Resolution

1. **Continue the work begun by the Conservation Panel and Task Force by Transitioning to an Advisory Committee.** In order to meet the King County Council's deadline for a report by the end of the year, the group agreed to bring the current effort to a close and continue the work regarding KCD priorities, programs and funding in an Advisory Committee structure. The proposed Advisory Committee will have representatives from KCD (2), King County (2), Seattle (1), Bellevue (1), Sound Cities Association (3), land owners (4 – agricultural, rural, urban, forestry), environmental community (1) and social justice and equity community (1). Each entity, including Bellevue, can name its own representative, either elected or staff, and also name an alternate. The Advisory Committee would likely begin its work in early 2014.
2. **Outreach.** The KCD has committed to work directly with King County cities over the next year in order to better understand the perspective of cities and to educate communities about KCD, its programs and investments and how KCD work benefits King County residents. KCD also wants to use the opportunity to learn more about city projects and potential opportunities for partnerships.
3. **Explore Options to Modify the KCD Election Process.** The group agreed that there needs to be a more accessible election process to provide greater awareness and participation. There are many issues associated with moving to a different election structure, including state law, cost and work currently underway at the state level on this same issue. Several different options were discussed, and the group committed to continuing the work as a top priority for the new Advisory Committee.
4. **Process Modifications to the Current Jurisdictional Grant Program.** The group established a subcommittee with broad representation, including Bellevue, to address the issue of streamlining the current jurisdictional grant program. KCD has agreed to maintain the current jurisdictional grant program as a direct allocation to each member jurisdiction as opposed to a competitive process and worked cooperatively with the subcommittee to address concerns raised by cities regarding the cumbersome grant application process. The subcommittee was successful and developed a new grant application and modified the process for submittal and approval. Work on this item will also continue with the new Advisory Committee.

Conservation and Natural Resource Programs for Further Regional Consideration

King County and KCD staff developed a draft list of KCD programmatic opportunities based on ideas presented throughout the process by Conservation Panel/Task Force members. The top new opportunities were:

- Rural small-lot forestry and urban tree canopy enhancement services;
- Rural farmer plans, technical assistance, and regulatory support;
- Urban farmer plans, technical assistance, and regulatory support;
- Expanded landowner incentive program;
- Shoreline and riparian education and technical assistance; and
- Regional food system and sustainable agriculture.

The group agreed to forward the list to the Advisory Committee and KCD for consideration in the future as programs, priorities and funding are examined.

Next Steps

KCD and King County staff will finalize the Conservation Panel/Task Force recommendations for submittal to the King County Council by December 31, 2013. In the meantime, work will begin to identify the new KCD Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that the Advisory Committee will begin meeting in early 2014.